

US Army Corps of Engineers Alaska District

# Public Notice of Application for Permit

Regulatory Division (1145) CEPOA-RD-NF 3437 Airport Way, Suite 206 Fairbanks, Alaska 99709-4777

PUBLIC NOTICE DATE:

June 5, 2007

EXPIRATION DATE:

July 5, 2007

REFERENCE NUMBER:

POA-2006-442-M

WATERWAY:

Tanana River

Interested parties are hereby notified that a Department of the Army permit application has been received for work in waters of the United States as described below and shown on the enclosed project drawings.

<u>APPLICANT</u>: Fairbanks North Star Borough, Department of Parks and Recreation, Post Office Box 71267, Fairbanks, Alaska 99707-1267

AGENT: Mr. John Haas, Fairbanks North Star Borough, Department of Parks and Recreation, Project Coordinator, Post Office Box 71267, Fairbanks, Alaska 99707-1267, (907) 459-1198

LOCATION: The project site is located in Sections 26, 27, 28, and 34, T. 1 S., R. 1 W., Fairbanks Meridian; USGS Quad Map Fairbanks D-2; Latitude 64.797° N., Longitude -147.737° W.; in Fairbanks, Alaska.

 $\underline{\text{PURPOSE}}$ : The applicant's stated purpose is to construct access and recreational facilities as Phase II of the Tanana Lakes Recreation Area (TLRA) development project.

PROPOSED WORK: The discharge of approximately 99,800 cubic yards (cy) of assorted fill into 26.2 acres of waters of the United States, including wetlands, for the construction of an access road, parking lots, picnic areas, trails, and a boat ramp. All work would be according to the attached plans, sheets 1-16, dated May 31, 2007.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Phase I of the TLRA project began in September 2006 and is ongoing under Department of Army permit POA-2006-442-4, Tanana River. Phase I includes dredging 700,000 cy of gravel from 12 acres of the project site, and placement of 236,000 cy of fill into 9.6 acres. To date, approximately 40,000 cy of gravel has been extracted from Dredge Area 1 (see sheet 7), the gravel stockpile area has been prepared, and the anchor pad and silt-water retention berm have been constructed. Gravel extraction operations in Dredge Area 1 will continue for approximately 2.5 years. Dredge Area 2 would be mined at a later date, and may require a time extension of the permit.

Phase II of the TRLA project would focus on recreational facilities:

- An access road 5,233'L x 30'W (at the top) would be constructed between Groins 8 and 9 (see sheets 7 and 9). Mechanized land clearing, ditching, and road bed construction would impact 8.0 acres of waters of the U.S.
- Three parking areas of variable size (see sheets 7, 8, and 10) are planned to serve the proposed boat ramp facility, a picnic area, and the east trailhead. These parking areas would impact a total of 8.4 acres of waters of the U.S.
- Two picnic areas would be constructed, the largest of which would serve the proposed boat ramp facility (see sheets 7, 8, and 12). Approximately 8.7 acres of waters of the U.S. would be impacted by this development.
- A 4.7-mile trail system would be constructed throughout the TLRA, including: 2.7 miles of non-motorized trail; 1.3 miles of multi-use trail; and 0.7 miles of nature trails with wildlife viewing platforms (see sheets 7, 11, and 13). Trail system development would impact 9.5 acres of waters of the U.S.
- A boat launch would be constructed on the east side of an existing gravel extraction lake (see sheets 7, 14, and 15). Boat ramp construction would impact 0.1 acres of waters of the U.S.

Approximately 96,200 cy of non-frost-susceptible gravel would be used to construct the access road, parking lots, trail systems, and picnic areas. An additional 3,100 cy of topsoil would be discharged for picnic areas, and 30 cy of crushed rock and 70 cy of concrete would be discharged for the boat ramp.

WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION: A permit for the described work will not be issued until a certification or waiver of certification, as required under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (Public Law 95-217), has been received from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation.

CULTURAL RESOURCES: The latest published version of the Alaska Heritage Resources Survey (AHRS) has been consulted for the presence or absence of historic properties, including those listed in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. There are no listed or eligible properties in the vicinity of the worksite. Consultation of the AHRS constitutes the extent of cultural resource investigations by the District Commander at this time, and he is otherwise unaware of the presence of such resources. This application is being coordinated with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Any comments SHPO may have concerning presently unknown archeological or historic data that may be lost or destroyed by work under the requested permit will be considered in our final assessment of the described work.

ENDANGERED SPECIES: No threatened or endangered species are known to use the project area. Preliminarily, the described activity will not affect threatened or endangered species, or modify their designated critical habitat, under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (87 Stat. 844). This application is being coordinated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Any comments they may have concerning endangered or threatened wildlife or plants or their critical habitat will be considered in our final assessment of the described work.

ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT: The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, as amended by the Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996, requires all Federal agencies to consult with the NMFS on all actions, or proposed actions, permitted, funded, or undertaken by the agency, that may adversely affect Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). Preliminarily, the described activity will not affect EFH in the project area. This Public Notice initiates EFH consultation with the NMFS. Any comments or recommendations they may have concerning EFH will be considered in our final assessment of the described work.

TRIBAL CONSULTATION: The Alaska District fully supports tribal self-governance and government-to-government relations between Federally recognized Tribes and the Federal government. Tribes with protected rights or resources that could be significantly affected by a proposed Federal action (e.g., a permit decision) have the right to consult with the Alaska District on a government-to-government basis. Views of each Tribe regarding protected rights and resources will be accorded due consideration in this process. This Public Notice serves as notification to the Tribes within the area potentially affected by the proposed work and invites their participation in the Federal decision-making process regarding the protected Tribal right or resource. Consultation may be initiated by the affected Tribe upon written request to the District Commander during the public comment period.

<u>PUBLIC HEARING</u>: Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests for public hearings shall state, with particularity, reasons for holding a public hearing.

EVALUATION: The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity and its intended use on the public interest. Evaluation of the probable impacts, which the proposed activity may have on the public interest, requires a careful weighing of all the factors that become relevant in each particular case. The benefits, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. The outcome of the general balancing process would determine whether to authorize a proposal, and if so, the conditions under which it will be allowed to occur. The decision should reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. All factors, which may be relevant to the proposal, must be considered including the cumulative effects thereof. Among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, cultural values, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shore erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership, and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people. For activities involving 404 discharges, a permit will be denied if the discharge that would be authorized by such permit would not comply with the Environmental Protection Agency's 404(b)(l) guidelines. Subject to the preceding sentence and any other applicable guidelines or criteria (see Sections 320.2 and 320.3), a permit will be granted unless the District Commander determines that it would be contrary to the public interest.

The Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, State, and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps of Engineers to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

Comments on the described work, with the reference number, should reach this office no later than the expiration date of this Public Notice to become part of the record and be considered in the decision. Please contact Sharon Seim by phone at (907) 474-2166 or by email at <a href="mailto:Sharon.G.Seim@poa02.usace.army.mil">Sharon.G.Seim@poa02.usace.army.mil</a>, if further information is desired concerning this notice.

AUTHORITY: This permit will be issued or denied under the following authorities:

(X) Discharge dredged or fill material into waters of the United States - Section 404 Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344). Therefore, our public interest review will consider the guidelines set forth under Section 404(b) of the Clean Water Act (40 CFR 230).

Project drawings and Notice of Application for State Water Quality Certification are enclosed with this Public Notice.

District Commander U.S. Army, Corps of Engineers

Enclosures

# STATE OF ALASKA

DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
DIVISION OF WATER
401 Certification Program
Non-Point Source Water Pollution Control Program

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION WQM/401 CERTIFICATION
555 CORDOVA STREET
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99501-2617
PHONE: (907) 269-7564/FAX: (907) 334-2415

# NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR STATE WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION

Any applicant for a federal license or permit to conduct an activity that might result in a discharge into navigable waters, in accordance with Section 401 of the Clean Water Act of 1977 (PL95-217), also must apply for and obtain certification from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation that the discharge will comply with the Clean Water Act, the Alaska Water Quality Standards, and other applicable State laws. By agreement between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of Environmental Conservation, application for a Department of the Army permit to discharge dredged or fill material into navigable waters under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act also may serve as application for State Water Quality Certification.

Notice is hereby given that the application for a Department of the Army Permit described in the Corps of Engineers' Public Notice No. POA-2006-442-M, Tanana River, serves as application for State Water Quality Certification from the Department of Environmental Conservation.

After reviewing the application, the Department may certify there is reasonable assurance the activity, and any discharge that might result, will comply with the Clean Water Act, the Alaska Water Quality Standards, and other applicable State laws. The Department also may deny or waive certification.

Any person desiring to comment on the project, with respect to Water Quality Certification, may submit written comments to the address above by the expiration date of the Corps of Engineer's Public Notice.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Work to be performed under this permit application is Phase II of the Fairbanks North Star Borough's (FNSB's) Tanana Lakes Recreation Area project, a 750-acre multiuse park south of Fairbanks, Alaska. Phase I of the project began in September 2006 and is ongoing under Department of the Army Permit POA-2006-442-4, as described in Block 23 of this permit application. This attachment describes the project purpose and need, outlines the proposed development plan, and provides figures detailing the proposed construction.

## Project Purpose & Need

The Tanana Lakes Recreation Area project concept originated approximately 15 years ago by the FNSB and its need to extract gravel for use at the South Cushman Landfill. The unsecured site has historically been a common place for illegal dumping of junk or abandoned vehicles and other refuse, as well as other unauthorized and criminal activities. However, bird watching remains a popular use of the area as large numbers of migratory bird species are observed in the area's wetland complex. Other existing uses of the area include waterfowl hunting and off-road vehicle recreation. Passing years have brought to the forefront the desire to clean up the site in order to enhance the wildlife habitat and natural features of the area in conjunction with the FNSB's intent to extract gravel. Considering the size and locality of the site, and its natural setting and resources, its potential as a recreational area was also realized.

The recreation area would offer year-round, convenient access to a variety of recreational and educational opportunities that would satisfy many user groups. The location is ideal for a community recreation area given its proximity to Fairbanks and Fort Wainwright. The site is also well situated for expansion, as the adjacent lands are owned by the FNSB and/or the State of Alaska. In addition to the multiple recreational opportunities the area would offer, the recreation area would enhance the integrity of the area's natural assets and unique wildlife and bird habitat. Current concept plans for the Tanana Lakes Recreation Area feature:

- An extensive series of non-motorized and multi-use trails for summer and winter use
- Swim beaches
- Non-motorized and motorized boating activities
- A boat launch to access the Tanana River
- Campgrounds
- Wildlife viewing platforms and nature trails
- Equine park and trail facilities
- Fishing
- Picnic areas
- Off-leash dog park and retriever training area
- Frisbee golf
- Archery range
- Rifle range
- Ice skating
- Off-road Vehicle Park
- Access to the Bonnifield Trail and 100-mile Loop Trail systems
- Parking lots, access roads, and an entrance station
- Approximately 188 acres of preserved natural habitat area

The project is a long-range, multi-phased effort, with gravel extraction and park development spanning the course of 15-20 years or more. In September 2006, the FNSB was permitted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to begin gravel extraction from a central portion of the site. The FNSB concurrently hired a local contractor to remove approximately 400 tons of junk cars from the area, and launched a volunteer clean-up effort to remove other refuse. In October 2006, the FNSB contracted with USKH, Inc., an Alaska-based architecture, engineering, surveying, and planning firm, to prepare a Master Plan for the Tanana Lakes Recreation Area.

The development concept presented in the Master Plan, which was completed in April 2007, includes both summer and winter recreational uses, which were largely motivated by public and agency input. An intensive scoping process was conducted during development of the Master Plan to identify and involve agencies early in the process; include the public in the development of the Master Plan; solicit agency and public comments to be considered and addressed in the Master Plan; and determine the need for special studies. The scoping process included distribution of an agency scoping letter, a public meeting, and an online project questionnaire. The Master Plan considers all input received from the scoping process and public meetings. Additionally, the Master Plan examines maintaining existing land uses, mitigating wetlands impacts, preserving areas of high wildlife habitat value, avoiding user conflicts, sequencing gravel extraction, and securing the site to help deter illegal activities.

Once development of the Tanana Lakes Recreation Area is complete, visitation is assumed to exceed 100,000 visitors per year. Preliminary estimates also suggest there is enough gravel to support operations at the South Cushman Landfill for at least 15 to 20 years.

#### **Development Plan**

Work to be performed under this permit application only applies to Phase II of the project, which includes preserving wildlife habitat areas, and constructing an access road, three parking areas, an extensive trail system, boat ramp, and two picnic areas as shown on Figure 3. Work is estimated to begin in June 2008, and be completed by 2012. Future phasing of the project has yet to be determined as it is dependent on many factors including but not limited to funding, user group interest, and gravel extraction operations. The following outlines the proposed development plan for Phase II of the project specific to this permit application.

#### Preserved Areas

Two habitat areas totaling 188 acres within the project boundary will be preserved as shown on Figure 3. One habitat area adjoins the east side of Groin 9, and is a condition under the Department of the Army Permit POA-2006-442-4 for Phase I of the project. The habitat area totals 7.5 acres and is separated by a gravel roadway into two similar size areas. The FNSB has proposed to remove the section of roadway separating the areas to combine the preserved habitat area into a 9-acre area. The second habitat area encompasses 179 acres, and was supported by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) early in the Master Plan process to preserve the highest value habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife within the project limits. This habitat area was originally negotiated by the USFWS with the FNSB to set aside 150 acres of the project site's prime habitat. Since that negotiation, the FNSB has expanded the area to 179 acres to better align the recreation amenities with the natural setting. Both habitat areas will be in a designated "Non-Motorized" Use Zone to help protect the integrity of the areas' habitat values. Motorized use will be permitted outside of this zone. The intent of "Motorized" versus "Non-

Motorized" Use Zones is to divide the project area into passive and active regions to accommodate the diversity of, and prevent conflicts between, recreation uses.

#### Access Road

The access road will be 5,233 feet in length and provide vehicular access between Groins 9 and Groin 10 to various amenities within the project area. It will be constructed to accommodate design loads for H-20 rated traffic loads. Fill material will consist of fast draining, non-frost susceptible gravel, and the roadway will be crowned to accommodate surface drainage to ditches along the roadside. Existing drainages will be later evaluated to determine where culverts will be required. Examination of site runoff for the new roadway will also address runoff treatment prior to outfall to wetlands and other water bodies. The typical roadway section will comprise a 4-foot depth, 30-foot width, 3:1 sloped shoulders, and drainage ditches as shown on Figure 4.

#### Parking Areas

Three parking areas are planned to serve various amenities within the project area as shown on Figure 3, and comprise a total of 8.4 acres. The three parking areas will serve the boat ramp facility, picnic area between Groins 9 and 10, and the east trailhead of the trail system. All parking areas will be constructed to accommodate H-20 rated traffic loads. Fill material will consist of fast draining, non-frost susceptible gravel, and proper grading will accommodate and treat site runoff prior to outfall to wetlands and other water bodies. All parking area will be excavated to a 2-foot depth, and have a typical fill depth of 3 feet with 3:1 sloped shoulders as shown on Figure 5.

#### Trail System

The trail system within the project area will consist of 14,360 feet (2.7 miles) of non-motorized trail in the central portion of the site, a 6,870-foot (1.3-mile) multi-use trail in the southern portion of Goose Island, and a series of three "foot traffic only" nature trails with six wildlife viewing platforms comprising a total of 3,440 feet (0.7 miles) within the preserved area. The trails will be constructed to accommodate their respective design loads using fast draining, non-frost susceptible gravel, and will comprise a 6-foot width with 3:1 sloped shoulders as shown on Figure 6. Sections of 6-foot wide boardwalk will be used at various locations as shown on Figure 3 to aid in channel crossings and mitigate wetland impacts. Boardwalk foundations will consider the underlying soil conditions and be comprised of 4-foot by 12-foot pressure-treated timber over land, and elevated helical anchor supports at channel crossings as shown on Figure 8. Wildlife viewing platforms will be constructed with pressure-treated timber, approximately 8-foot by 8-foot in size, and have the same type of foundation as the boardwalks.

#### Boat Ramp

The boat ramp design considers shoreline topography, water level fluctuations, and general accessibility and maintenance. The ramp will consist of 6-inch thick pre-cast concrete panels and be 75 feet long and 40 feet wide with a scour apron at the toe and sides of the ramp consisting of riprap and crushed rock as shown on Figures 9 and 10.

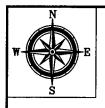
Fairbanks North Star Borough

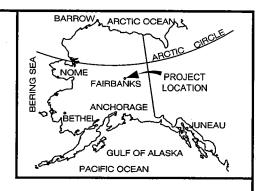
#### Picnic Areas

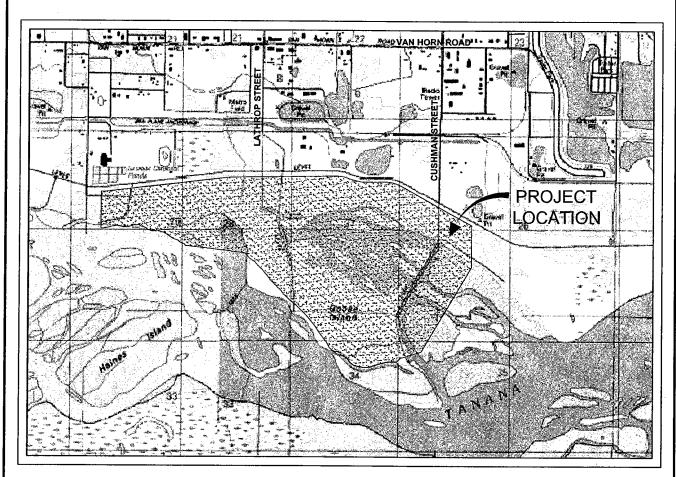
Two picnic areas are planned consisting of a 6.6-acre picnic area at the boat ramp facility and a 2.1-acre picnic area between Groins 9 and 10 in the central portion of the project area. The picnic areas will be offset, yet easily accessible from the trail system and parking areas to allow ease of user accessibility, and keep primary trail and vehicle traffic outside of these areas. Fill material will consist of fast draining, non-frost susceptible gravel under a blanket of topsoil. Proper grading of the areas will accommodate site runoff and treatment prior to outfall to wetlands and other water bodies. Use of a proper seed mix and accompanying vegetation will later be examined for fast establishment and hardiness, particularly in relation to high summer use and mitigation as an animal food source. The typical section for these picnic areas will comprise a 6-inch minimum gravel depth with a minimum 4-inch layer of topsoil and 6:1 sloped edges as shown on Figure 7.

#### **Erosion and Sediment Control**

An Erosion and Sediment Control Plan will be included in the contract specifications, and the FNSB and Contractor as co-applicants will prepare a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan for this project. All excavated material will be removed and disposed of in upland areas. The project area will be staked to ensure all project activities stay within project limits and do not impact additional areas. The Contractor will comply with all requirements related to erosion and sediment control as specified in the contract documents.







## **LOCATION & VICINITY MAP**

# TANANA LAKES RECREATION AREA PHASE II

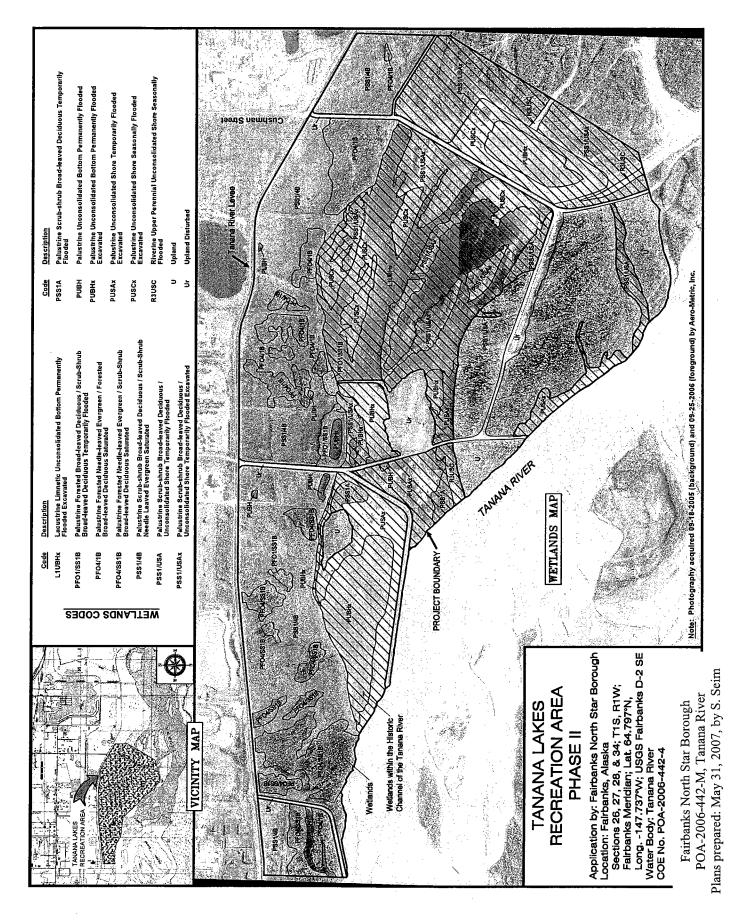
Application by: Fairbanks North Star Borough Location: Fairbanks, Alaska Sections 26, 27, 28, & 34; T1S, R1W; Fairbanks Meridian; Lat. 64.797°N, Long. -147.737°W; USGS Fairbanks D-2 SE Water Body: Tanana River COE No. POA-2006-442-4

Fairbanks North Star Borough POA-2006-442-M, Tanana River Plans prepared: May 31, 2007, by S. Seim

**Project Location & Vicinity** 

 $1" \approx 2300 \text{ feet}$ 

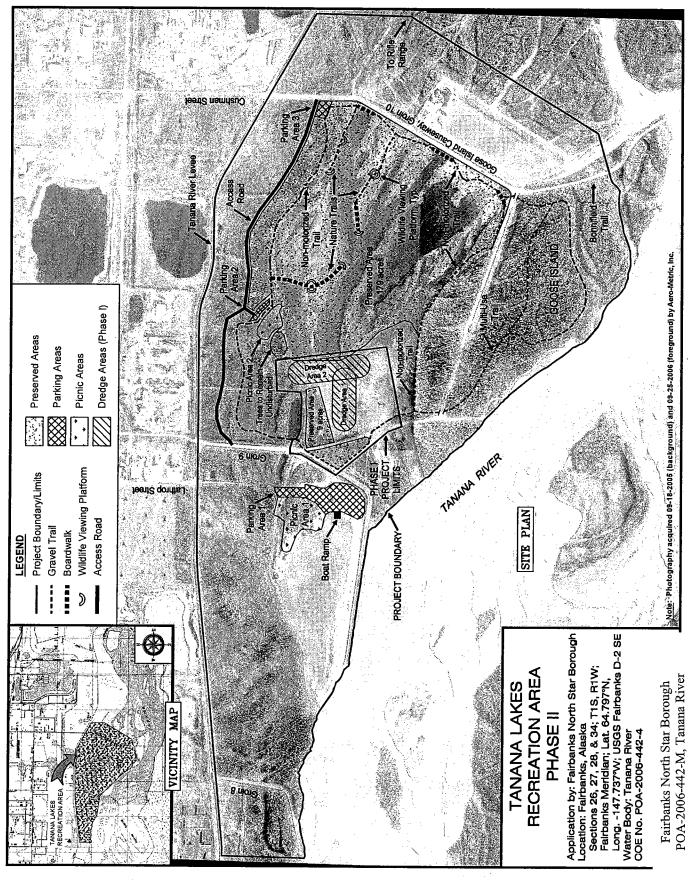
Page 5 of 16



Waters of the U.S. 1"  $\approx 1100$  feet

Раяе

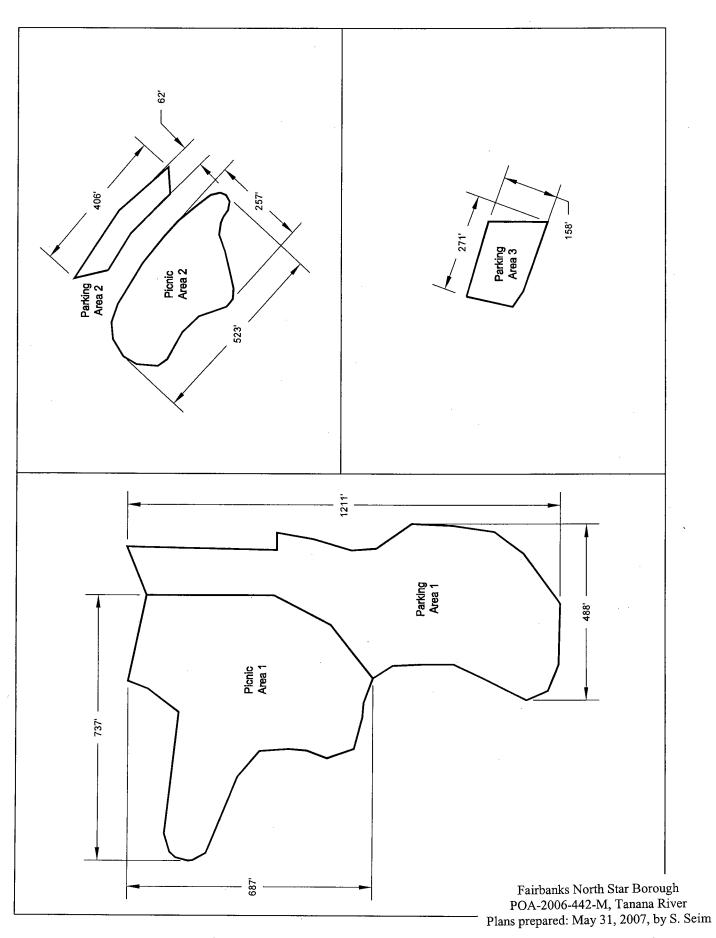
Page 6 of 16

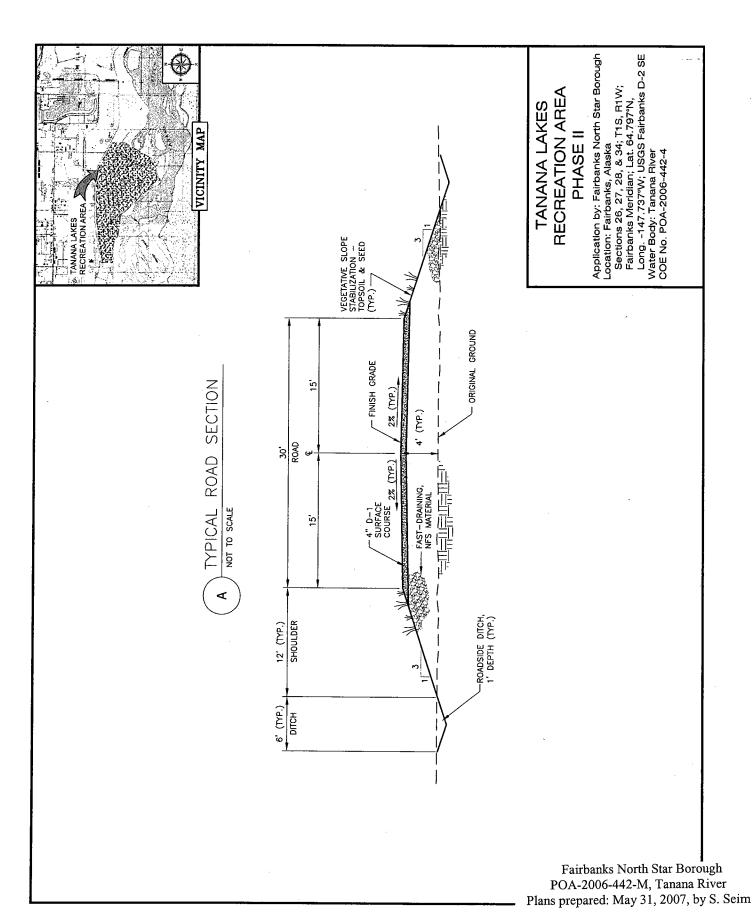


Plans prepared: May 31, 2007, by S. Seim

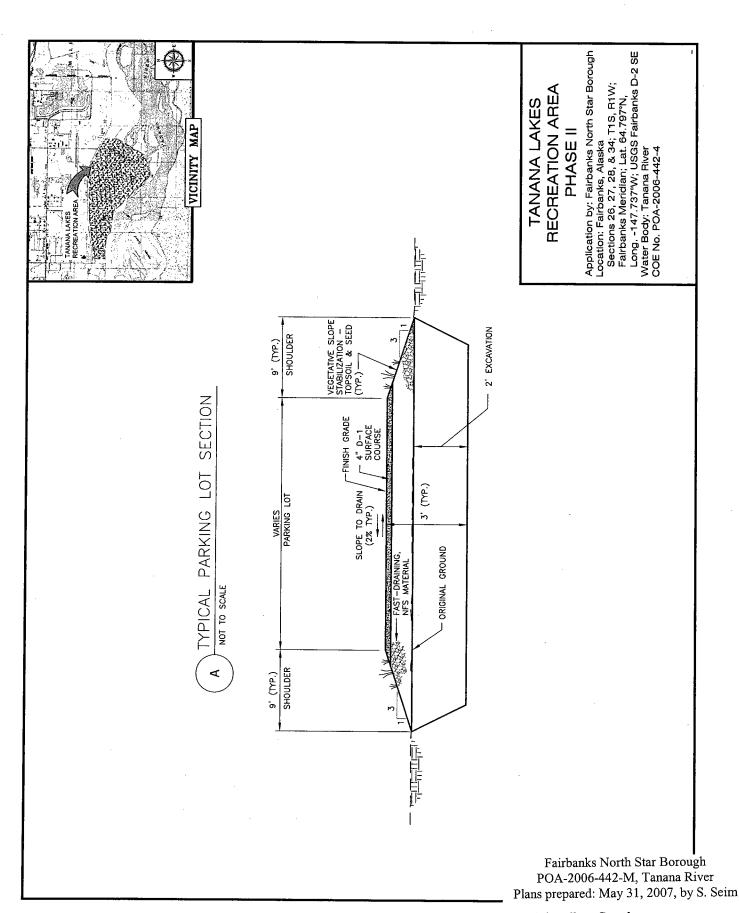
Project Plan View 1"  $\approx 1100$  feet

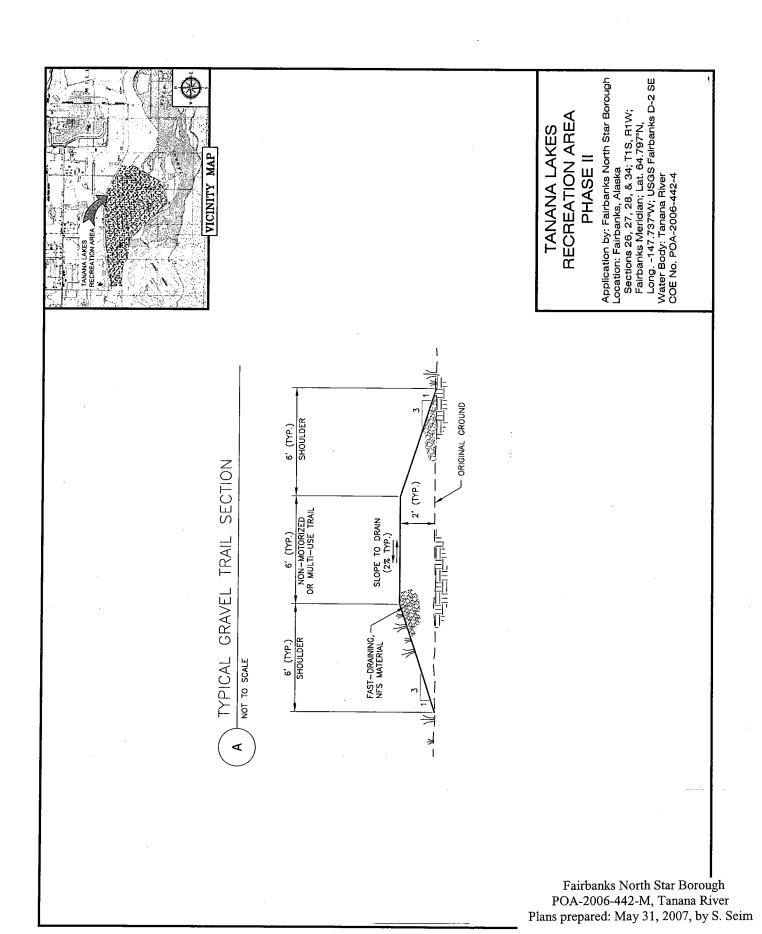
Page 7 of 16

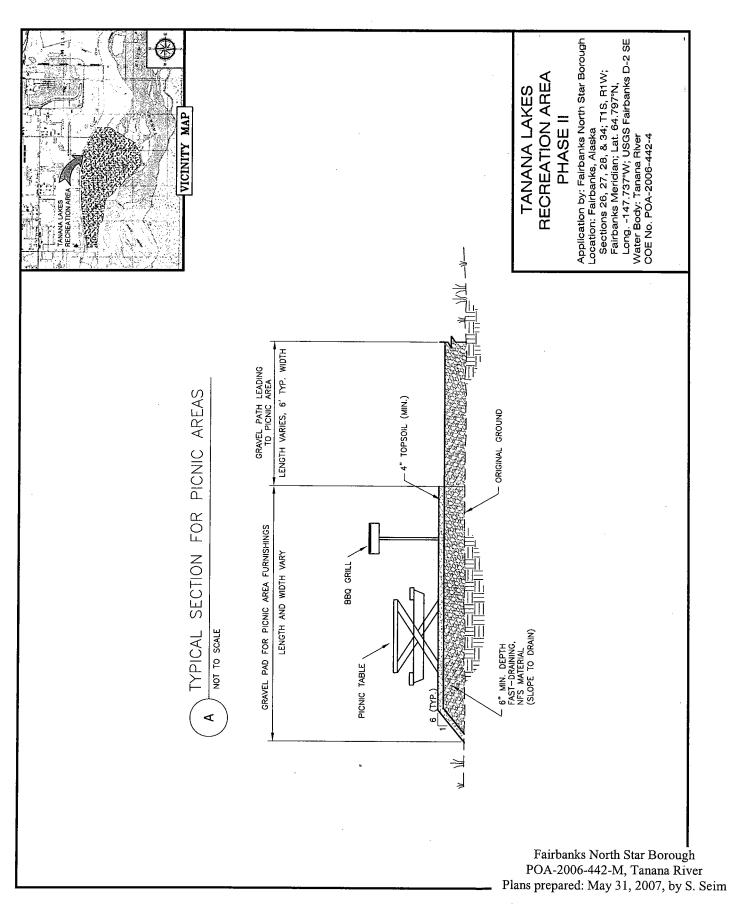


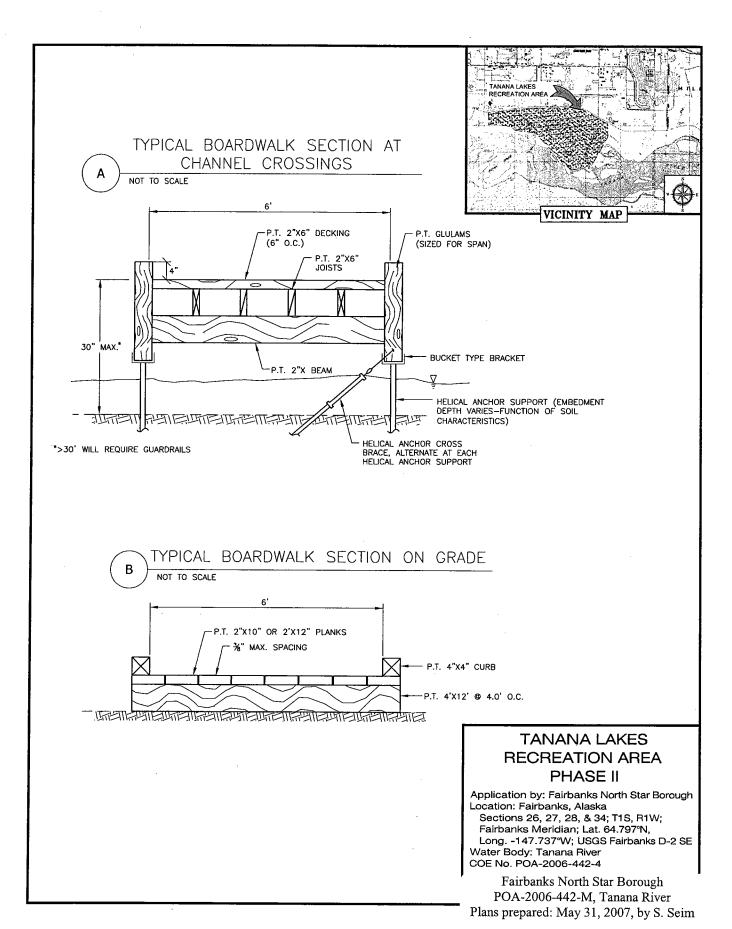


# **Road Section**



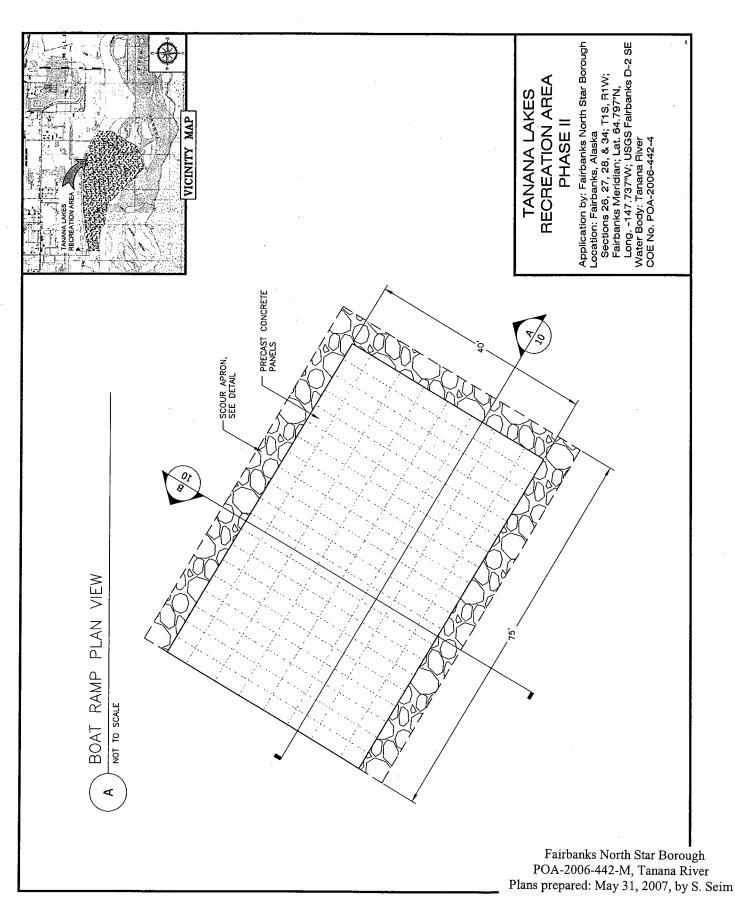


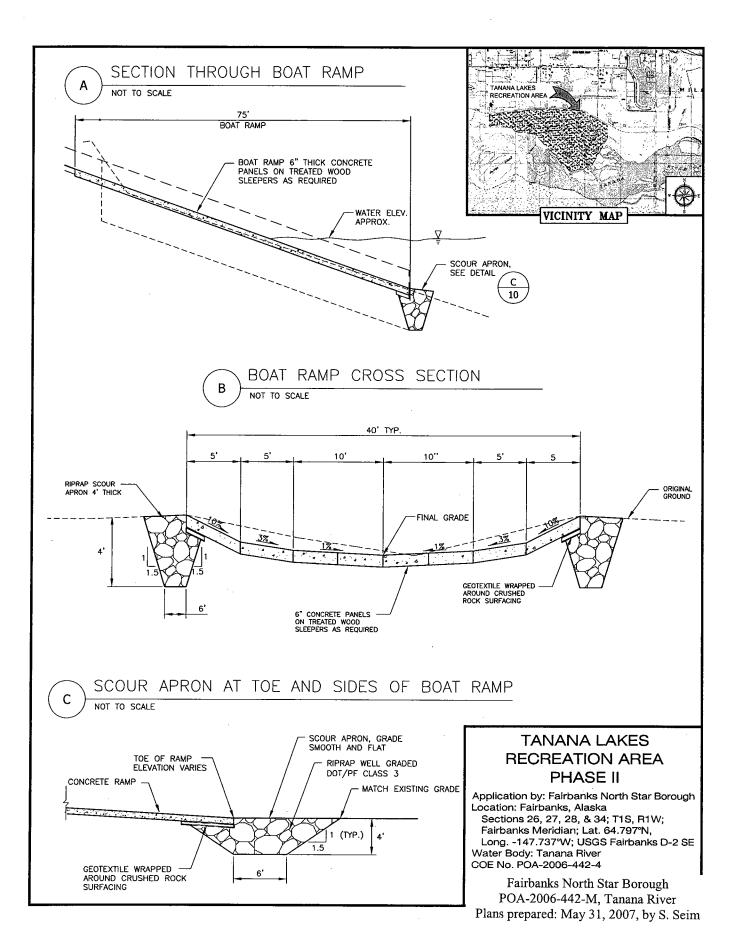




## **Boardwalk Sections**

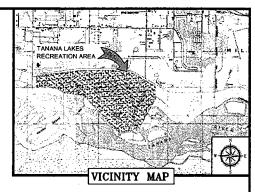
Not to Scale





# **Boat Ramp Sections**

Not to Scale



SUMMARY OF WETLAND IMPACTS - PHASE II						
	WETLAND TYPE	DREDGE AREA OF WETLANDS IMPACT (ACRES)	FILL AREA OF WETLANDS IMPACT (ACRES)	TOTAL WETLAND IMPACT AREA (ACRES)	DREDGE QUANTITY (CUBIC YARDS)	FILL QUANTITY (CUBIC YARDS)
ACCESS ROAD	PF PSS	0.5 1.0	2.2 4.3	8.0	1,200	34,200
PARKING AREA 1	PSS PUB/S	0.5 6.2	0.5 6.2	6.7	22,700	34,000
PARKING AREA 2	PF PSS	0.4 0.1	0.4 0.1	0.5	1,700	2,600
PARKING AREA 3	PF	0.8	0.8	0.8	2,700	4,100
BOAT LAUNCH	PUB/S	0	0.1	0.1	0	500
NATURE TRAILS	PF PSS PUB/S L	0.1 0.1 0.3 0.2	0.1 0.1 0.3 0.2	0.7	100	2,000
NON-MOTORIZED TRAIL	PF PSS PUB/S L	0 0 0	2.2 1.3 0.8 0.4	4.7	100	10,000
MULTI-USE TRAIL	PUB/S	0	0.1	0.1	0	100
PICNIC AREA 1	PSS PUB/S	0 0	0.2 2.3	2.5	0	7,500
PICNIC AREA 2	PF PSS	0 0	0.2 1.9	2.1	0	4,800
TOTAL	-	10.2	24.7	26.2	28,500	99,800

# SUMMARY OF WETLAND IMPACTS

PF = PALUSTRINE FORESTED WETLAND
PSS = PALUSTRINE SHRUB SCRUB WETLAND
PUB/S = PALUSTRINE UNCONSOLIDATED BOTTOM/SHORE WETLAND
L = LACUSTRINE WETLAND
R = RIVERINE WETLAND

# TANANA LAKES RECREATION AREA PHASE II

Application by: Fairbanks North Star Borough Location: Fairbanks, Alaska Sections 26, 27, 28, & 34; T1S, R1W; Fairbanks Meridian; Lat. 64.797°N, Long. -147.737°W; USGS Fairbanks D-2 SE Water Body: Tanana River COE No. POA-2006-442-4

Fairbanks North Star Borough POA-2006-442-M, Tanana River Plans prepared: May 31, 2007, by S. Seim

# **Summary of Impacts**